



Lower Cowpasture Restoration and Management Project

George Washington and Jefferson National Forests

The Lower Cowpasture Restoration and Management Project is the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests' first-ever large landscape and integrated resource planning effort. The project plan describes restoration activities within 117,500 acres of public and private lands.



Letter from District Ranger McNichols

Hello:

2018 started off with the very good news that the LCRMP was awarded 100% of the second year funding request for the Joint Chiefs' Partnership Grant of \$599,810.

The USFS portion is \$449,810 which includes \$128,160 for prescribe burning; \$59,250 for non-native invasive treatment, \$82,400 for hardwood thinning and timber stand improvement; \$30,000 for pollinator habitat establishment; \$12,000 for mussel augmentation, and \$133,000 for aquatic organism passage and watershed improvement, and \$5,000 for vernal pool habitat.

We are looking forward to another successful year of LCRMP implementation.

Elizabeth McNichols
District Ranger

What is Happening with The Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership?

The Lower Cowpasture Restoration Project is restoring the health, diversity and resiliency of fire-adapted forests and rare plant communities while working to decrease the risk of wildfire to adjacent communities; improve habitat for declining early successional birds and other species important to Virginia; improve water quality, function and connectivity of streams and full passage of aquatic organisms, including surrogate species such as brook trout and other rare fish and mussel species; and remove non-native invasive plant species while restoring native plant diversity to promote the health of honeybees and other pollinators.

Total FY 2018 Funding - \$599,810 NRCS - \$150,000 Forest Service- \$449,810

Implementation Current Events

Walton Tract Fish and Wildlife Habitat

- Fish and Wildlife Habitat: Native Grass-Forb conversion at Walton Tract fields continues, with 15 acres slated to be converted from cool warm season grasses to native wildflower-grass mix. Fields are prepared for planting with native grasses and forbs once the weather permits and soil temperatures warm. Riparian planting supplies are being identified and ordered. Uprooted autumn olive piles are ready for burning ~weather permitting.



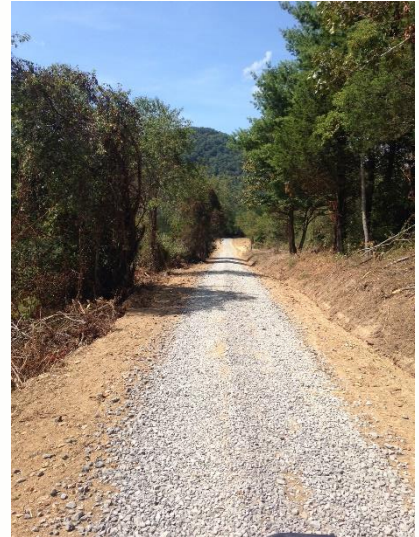
Preparing seed bed for pollinator habitat, Walton Tract Credit – Jenny Henning, USFS

Aquatic, Riparian and Watershed Resources

- Aquatic Passage/Watershed Restoration: Two large stream systems, Porters Mill and Piney Mountain Branch bottomless culverts have been awarded. Work will begin in 2018. Surveys and planning of culvert replacements on Pads Ck (FSR 129) and Limekiln Rd (FSR 194) have been completed. Obligating and identifying funding sources to implement these projects are in the works.



*Piney Mountain Branch Road
Credit -Jenny Henning, USFS*



Lime Kiln Road Credit- Jenny Henning, USFS

Ecosystem Restoration –
Vegetation Management

- Cliftondale Timber Sale was sold in November 2017 and has been active.
- The Crafty Timber Sale is currently being advertised with a bid opening date of March 26, 2018. The McGraw Timber Sale is prepped and we will be appraising this sale soon. Award for McGraw will be in the 3rd quarter 2018.
- Timber sales currently being implemented include Cliftondale, Lime Kiln, Porters Mill, and Beards Mountain.



Porters Mill Timber Sale Credit – Elizabeth McNichols, USFS

Ecosystem Restoration -
Wildlife Habitat, Forest
Health and Silviculture

- We have submitted contract packages for our FY18 Crop Tree Release (413 acres) This contract involves releasing desirable crop trees in young stands (20-30 years old) to increase the mast producing capabilities. This project was funded by the Joint Chiefs' Grant.
- Knutsen Vanderberg reforestation work will consist of site preparation on Porters Mill (142 acres) and Beards Mountain (93 acres).
- We will be treating approximately 114 acres of non-native invasive species funded by the Joint Chiefs Grant using contract and force account work.



*Tree-of-heaven infesting a forest road right-of-way
Credit - Richard Gardner, Bugwood.org*

Ecosystem Restoration - Fire

- Our Spring lineup for prescribe burns is quite robust and several will be located within the LCRMP.
- ✓ Coffee Pot (361 ac)
- ✓ North Short Mountain (2,258 ac)
- ✓ Middle Mountain (921 ac.)
- ✓ Mares Run (842 ac.)
- ✓ Walton Tract (40 ac.)



*Frank Simmons preparing prescribe burn lines with the DR mower
Credit – Nikole Simmons, TNC*

What's Happening?

Big thanks to TNC volunteer writer Beth Mizell who captured thru pictures and words the incredible projects happening on the ground in the LCRMP, funded by the Joint Chiefs' grant. Everyone who has read the report are so impressed with not only the projects – but the great way it was communicated. Thank you again Beth!!!



Beth Mizell

Lower Cowpasture Implementation Field Trip-Coming Soon This Summer

Our annual LCRMP field trip is planned for summer to look at aquatic passage, wildlife projects and fire and fuels projects. Stay tuned for a date and location.

Please refer to the LCRMP project website for maps and updates:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gwj/home/?cid=STELPRDB5420614>